"R" and "S"}, {"T", "U" and "V"} and {"W", "X", "Y" and "Z"}). In contrast, in embodiments of the invention, the groups of letters sent to the predictive text software module (and in some cases, the number of letters sent) depend upon the touch location (e.g. {"R" and "T"} or {"T" and "Y"}). T9 is generally applicable to physical keys coupled to a switch, while the embodiments of the present invention described hereinabove are applicable to "virtual" keys, for example, on a touchpad or touchscreen. Even in situations where T9 is applied to virtual keys, the virtual keys displayed to the user are such that the letters are presented to the user in fixed groupings.

[0058] Unlike reduced QWERTY keyboards, in which letters are paired up to reduce the number of physical keys and therefore the number of switches, in embodiments of the present invention, the appearance of a traditional QWERTY keyboard is preserved. Moreover, reduced QWERTY keyboards always pair the same two letters, while embodiments of the present invention may pair a given letter with either of its adjacent letters (if the given letter is not at the end of a row).

[0059] It will be appreciated that although the description of some embodiments of the invention given above is in terms of rows of letters and horizontal centers of letters, in alternative embodiments of the invention, the letters are arranged in columns and the touch location relative to the vertical centers of letters is used to determine which two adjacent letters are to be selected.

[0060] While certain features of embodiments of the invention have been illustrated and described herein, many modifications, substitutions, changes, and equivalents will now occur to those of ordinary skill in the art. It is, therefore, to be understood that the appended claims are intended to cover all such modifications and changes as fall within the true spirit of the invention.

What is claimed is:

1. A method comprising:

associating overlapping areas of a touch interface of a mobile electronic device with letters such that each area is associated with only one letter.

2. The method of claim 1, further comprising:

detecting a location of a user's touch on said touch interface; and

for each area of said touch interface which includes said location, identifying the letter associated therewith.

3. The method of claim 2, further comprising:

if two or more letters are identified, using predictive text software to determine which of said identified letters said user intended to select.

4. The method of claim 3, further comprising:

providing said predictive text software with an indication that said location is closer to one of said identified letters than to others of said identified letters.

5. The method of claim 3, further comprising:

providing said predictive text software with an indication of how much closer said location is to one of said identified letters than to others of said identified letters.

6. A mobile electronic device comprising:

one or more touch interfaces to receive a touch by a user;

means for displaying one or more rows of letters;

means for associating overlapping areas of said one or more touch interfaces with said letters such that each area is associated with only one letter; and

a microprocessor to identify which letters are associated with areas of said touch interfaces that include a location of said touch.

7. The mobile electronic device of claim 6, wherein said one or more touch interfaces is a single touchpad.

8. The mobile electronic device of claim 7, wherein said rows of letters are spaced at a sufficient vertical distance that there is no ambiguity as to which row of letters is being touched.

9. The mobile electronic device of claim 6, wherein said one or more touch interfaces are two or more touchpads.

10. The mobile electronic device of claim 6, wherein said one or more touch interfaces is a single touchscreen.

11. The mobile electronic device of claim 10, wherein said rows of letters are spaced at a sufficient vertical distance that there is no ambiguity as to which row of letters is being touched.

12. The mobile electronic device of claim 10, wherein for at least one particular letter, an area of said touchscreen associated with said particular letter is overlapped by an area of said touchscreen associated with a different letter of an adjacent row.

13. The mobile electronic device of claim 6, wherein for at least one particular letter, an area of said touch interface associated with said particular letter is completely overlapped jointly by a portion of an area of said touch interface associated with an adjacent letter to the left of said particular letter and by a portion of an area of said touch interface associated with an adjacent letter to the right of said particular letter.

14. The mobile electronic device of claim 6, wherein for at least one particular letter, an area of said touch interface associated with said particular letter is partially overlapped by a portion of an area of said touch interface associated with an adjacent letter to the left of said particular letter and by a portion of an area of said touch interface associated with an adjacent letter to the right of said particular letter.

15. The mobile electronic device of claim 6, wherein said microprocessor is to execute a predictive text software module to determine which of said identified letters said user intended to select.

* * * * *